

Message Text

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15

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00

USIE-00 CCO-00 INRE-00 USSS-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 ACDA-19 IO-14

AID-20 A-01 SY-10 EB-11 COME-00 SCA-01 TRSE-00 AF-10

DRC-01 OPR-02 /189 W

----- 021388

O 190828Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4809

INFO DIA IMMEDIATE

USCINCEUR IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ATHENS IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 12278

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS LE

SUBJ: ATTACK ON BANK OF AMERICA - SITREP 6

1. BETWEEN 0810-15 EMBOFFS TALKED WITH MAXWELL (IN BANK), MOCK, DIB (DG OF PRESIDENCY) AND SPOKESMAN FOR THOSE HOLDING HOSTAGES. SPOKESMAN AGREED POSTPONE ACTION UNTIL 0900 HOURS BUT NOT ONE MINUTE LONGER--UNLESS THEIR DEMANDS ARE MET THEY SAY THEY WILL SHOOT HOSTAGES STARTING WITH MAXWELL. COMMANDOS CLAIM THAT GOL AGREED TO THEIR DEMANDS BUT BANK DID NOT. BANK, HOWEVER, ACCORDING TO MOCK WHO HAD TALKED WITH HOLLANDER, AGREED TO PAY IN ORDER TO SAVE LIVES. THIS INFO WAS PASSED TO DIB AND TO COL ALI HUSSAINI, DEP CHIEF OF JUDICIAL POLICE, AT POLICE COMMAND POST.

2. COMMANDOS HAVE BEEN TENTATIVELY IDENTIFIED AS LEBANESE GANG OF EXTREMISTS, RATHER THAN PALESTINIAN
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FEDAYEEN AS FIRST THOUGHT. THIS GANG HAS RECORD OF

PAST BANK ROBBERIES, WHICH ALSO EXPLAINED ON IDEOLOGICAL GROUNDS. GANG HAS PAST RECORD OF FEDAYEEN AND COMMUNIST PARTY AFFILIATIONS BUT NOT KNOWN TO BE SO AFFILIATED AT THIS TIME.

3. GANG'S DEMANDS WHICH FOLLOW, WERE PASSED TO GOL. THEY ASKED THAT ALGERIAN AMBASSADOR OR SOUTH YEMEN AMBASSADOR COME TO THE BANK TO SEE THEM. THEY ALSO ASKED FOR GHASSAN TUEINI AND ABOU ZAIM, RESISTANCE REPRESENTATIVE. LATTER SUPPOSEDLY KNOWS THEIR DEMANDS AND WAS PROPOSED BY THE LEBANESE GOVT AS NEGOTIATOR. THEY WANT ONE OF THE ABOVE PERSONALITIES TO ACCOMPANY THEM OUTSIDE LEBANON.

4. WE HAVE CONVEYED ALL ABOVE INFO TO GOL, TOGETHER WITH OPINION OF BANK REPS THAT SECURITY FORCES NOT RPT NOT ATTACK BANK. WE HAVE REPEATED TO GOL THAT WE ACTING AS CHANNEL COMMUNICATIONS, THAT USG NOT RPT NOT TAKING POSITION ON MATTER, AND THAT WE HAVE CONFIDENCE IN GOL.

5. AT 0905 AMBASSADOR SPOKE TO MAXWELL AND A LEBANESE EMPLOYEE INSIDE BANK. HE OFFERED DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE FACILITATE CONTACTS WITH INTERMEDIARIES DESCRIBED BY GANG. LATTER AGREED TO POSTPONE DEADLINE AGAIN TO 1015 LOCAL.

6. AT 0935 AMBASSADOR CALLED PRES FRANGIE TO SAY THAT HE IN CONTACT WITH GANG, THAT WE DOING OUR BEST TO PLAY FOR TIME, THAT WE UNDERSTAND DIFFICULTIES FACING PRES AND GOL, AND THAT WE PREPARED SUPPORT WHATEVER DECISION GOL MIGHT TAKE. AMBASSADOR SAID HE PREPARED TO DO ANYTHING HE COULD TO BE HELPFUL AND WOULD BE WILLING CALL ALGERIAN AMB AS GANG HAD REQUESTED IF PRESIDENT APPROVED. FRANGIE EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR TELEPHONE CALL AND AGREED THAT STALLING TACTICS USEFUL, AS WAS RECENTLY CASE IN KUWAIT. HE APPROVED IDEA OF TELEPHONE CALL TO ALGERIAN AMB.

7. AMBASSADOR SPOKE TO ALGERIAN AMBASSADOR YAZID. YAZID SAID THOSE IN BANK WERE GANG OF LEBANESE CRIMINALS WITHOUT ANY POLITICAL AFFILIATION. HE COULD NOT PLAY ROLE IN ABSENCE OF FORMAL GOL REQUEST AND APPROVED BY HIS GOVT. CONFIDENTIAL

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GANG IN TOUCH WITH HIM AND HE TRYING STALL FOR TIME, AMBASSADORS BUFFUM AND YAZID AGREED THEY WOULD TELL GANG THEY IN CONTACT WITH EACH OTHER AND WITH GOL, INCLUDING PRES FRANGIE, TO TRY AND FACILITATE AGREEMENT.

8. IN SUBSEQUENT CONVERSATION INFO PARA 7 CONVEYED TO GANG. LATTER SAID THEY WOULD CONFIRM THIS WITH YAZID AND WOULD GIVE HIM CHANCE TO BE USEFUL. THEY SAID DEADLINE

WOULD BE EXTENDED UNTIL AT LEAST 1100.
BUFFUM

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